

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 3-8 and 11-16 contain allowable subject matter.

Drawings

Applicant respectfully requests to indicate whether the drawings filed on October 25, 2001 are acceptable.

Priority Claim

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge the claim of foreign priority. The present application is a continuation of PCT application PCT/FR 00/01137 filed on April 28, 2000, which claims priority to French Patent application FR 99/05444 filed on April 29, 1999.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1, 3-9, and 11-16 were pending in the referenced application. Claims 3 and 11 have been cancelled by this reply. Further, new independent claims 17 and 18 have been added by this reply. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from independent claims 1 and 9.

Claim Amendments

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 3. Independent claim 9 has been amended to include the allowable subject

matter of cancelled claim 11. No new matter has been added by any of the aforementioned amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

As discussed above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 3. Accordingly, independent claim 1, as amended, is now allowable. Further, dependent claims 4-8 are now also allowable as they depend from an allowable independent claim.

In addition, as discussed above, independent claim 9 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 11. Accordingly, independent claim 9, as amended, is now allowable. Further, dependent claims 12-16 are now also allowable as they depend from an allowable independent claim.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,006,328 and U.S. Patent No. 5,495,521. As discussed above, independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

New Claims

New independent claim 17 has been added by this reply. New independent claim 17 includes all the limitations of independent claim 1 (prior to the amendments made in this reply) as well as the limitations of allowable dependent claim 8. Accordingly, new independent claim 17 is allowable.

Further, new independent claim 18 has been added by this reply. New independent claim 18 includes all the limitations of independent claim 9 (prior to the amendments made in this reply) as well as the limitations of allowable dependent claim 16. Accordingly, new independent claim 16 is allowable.

In view of the above, favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is requested for new independent claims 17 and 18.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09669/012001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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